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DEC 13 2006

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:
Craig M. Whitehouse, et al.	: DECISION ON PETITION
Application No. 09/901,428	: UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)
Filed: July 9, 2001	:
Attorney Docket No. 840.052.203	:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3), filed June 6, 2006 to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 for the benefit of priority to prior-filed nonprovisional application No. 09/808,468.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition for acceptance of a claim for late priority under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) is applicable to applications filed on or after November 29, 2000 and is appropriate only after the expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii). Further, a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) of the prior-filed application(s), unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The petition does not comply with item (1).

The present petition is not accompanied by an Application Data Sheet or an amendment to the first sentence of the specification following the title to include a proper reference to prior-filed application No. 09/808,468. It is noted that an amendment requesting the claim for priority to this prior-filed nonprovisional application was filed on February 8, 2006; however, not only

37 CFR 1.78(a)(2)(i) requires that any nonprovisional application claiming the benefit of one or more prior-filed copending nonprovisional applications must contain or be amended to contain a reference to each such prior-filed application, identifying it by application number (consisting of the series code and serial number) and indicating the relationship of the applications. The relationship between the applications is whether the subject application is a continuation, divisional, or continuation-in-part of a prior-filed nonprovisional application. An example of a proper benefit claim is: “This application is a continuation of Application No. 10/---, filed---.” A benefit claim that merely states: “This application claims the benefit of Application No. 10/---, filed---,” does not comply with 37 CFR 1.72(a)(2)(i) since the proper relationship, which includes the type of continuing application, is not stated. Also, the status of each nonprovisional parent application (if it is patented or abandoned) should also be indicated, following the filing date of the parent nonprovisional application. *See* MPEP Section 201.11, Reference to Prior Nonprovisional Applications.

Further, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed applications. An incorporation by reference statement added after an application's filing date is not effective because no new matter can be added to an application after its filing date (*see* 35 U.S.C. § 132(a)). If an incorporation by reference statement is included in an amendment to the specification to add a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 after the filing date of the application, the amendment would not be proper. When a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 120 is submitted after the filing of an application, the reference to the prior application cannot include an incorporation by reference statement of the prior application. *See* Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980). *Note* MPEP §§ 201.06(c) and 608.04(b).

If reconsideration of this decision is desired, a renewed petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(3) and an Application Data Sheet or an amendment (complying with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.121 and 37 CFR 1.76(b)(5)) to correct the above matters are required.

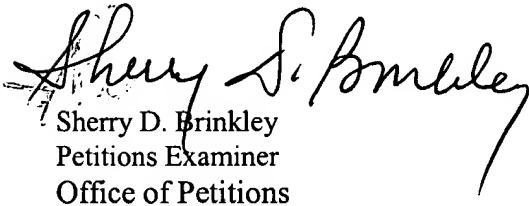
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